

REMARKS

The application has been amended and is believed to be in condition for allowance.

Withdrawn claims have been cancelled without prejudice.

Claim 27 has been amended responsive to the claim objection.

New claims directed to the elected method are presented. Claim amendments are also made. No new matter is entered by way of these amendments.

The present amendment is fully responsive to the Official Action.

Claims 24, 30, 31, and 32 were rejected as being rendered obvious over ADAMS 2003/0035014 in view of SAWADA 5,531,819, LOUVEL GB 2,152,436, and HE 7,186,945.

Claim 27 was rejected in further view of DELP 6,924,077.

Claim 44 was rejected in further view of SATO 4,061,808.

The large number of references being relied upon is noted and indicative of the non-obvious nature of the present invention.

As the claims clearly recite, the invention provides an automated process for indelibly marking a tape label for sealing

a package in a tamper proof or tamper apparent manner, and for marking and sealing the package.

In one embodiment of the invention, the tape label is suitable for and applied to meat packaging where following the marking of the tape, the tape is immediately applied to the meat package.

In contrast to the prior art, in particular ADAMS, the present invention allows the sealing and marking of a package in a single operation. This allows real-time marking of the packages including providing content and weight information specific to the product being packaged (specification page 6, lines 4-10). As such, this invention provides a process resulting in tamper evident or tamper proof tape sealing and marking a package.

In contrast, ADAMS relates to the field of 'label' marking where the labels are small individual labels mass produced on a carrier sheet and intended for application to an article such as a car windshield. As amended, the present claims are specific to tape. ADAMS does not teach or suggest such a method or application.

Further, ADAMS does not teach or suggest forming weakened areas in the marked tape so as to provide for tamper proof or tamper evident properties.

Indeed, ADAMS does not suggest marking sealing tape or using a marked tape to seal a package, or including weakened areas for tamper proof sealing of a package.

SAWADA discloses a hot melt ink, but there is no disclosure of the use of hot wax ink for printing onto the adhesive of a tape. There is no teaching that hot wax ink-jet printing would be effective on a tape adhesive.

SATO does disclose perforations used for defining individual labels or for engaging with a feed roller in a labeling machine. However, there is no disclosure of forming weakened sections/areas as now recited so as to have the tamper proof or tamper evident properties, especially in a method as recited.

LOUVEL discloses printing the keys of a keyboard. There is no suggestion that this system could be suitable for printing, e.g., reverse printing, on a tape adhesive layer.

HE discloses printing on semiconductor wafers. Again, there is no suggestion that this system could be suitable for printing, e.g., reverse printing, on a tape adhesive layer.

In view of these clear differences between the recited invention and the teachings of the applied art, applicants believe that it is clear that the claims are non-obvious.

Reconsideration and allowance of all the claims are respectfully requested.

Should there be any matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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